STATE OF CALIFORNIA -- THE RESOURCES AGENCY

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# RECORD PACKET COPY

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# STAFF REPORT: REGULAR CALENDAR

APPLICATION NO.: 4-00-179

APPLICANT: MM Trust & Infrastructure Development Corp.

**AGENT: Jaime Harnish** 

PROJECT LOCATION: 5078 Latigo Canyon Road, City of Malibu, Los Angeles County

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Adjust the lot line between two parcels (3.0 and 3.4 acres) to create two parcels (3.7 and 2.7 acres), cap existing septic system, construct new septic system to serve existing residence on one parcel, second parcel is vacant.

Existing Parcel Area: Parcel 1 3.007 acres Parcel 2 3.336 acres Proposed Parcel Area: Parcel 1 A 3.669 acres Parcel 2 A 2.705 acres Existing Developed Parcel 1 Moved to Parcel 1 A Residence and Garage: 3,730 sq. ft. Project Density one du/2 and 3 acres

# SUMMARY OF STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The applicants request approval to adjust the parcel line between two parcels to add about one half acre of land to the larger parcel resulting in the existing single family residence being located to the larger parcel. The proposal also reduces the size of the other parcel accordingly which will remain vacant. An existing septic system will be capped and retained on the vacant lot for future development, while a new septic system for the existing residence will be constructed on the adjusted parcel. The driveway to this existing residence leads from Latigo Canyon Road located to the north, while an existing dirt driveway leading from Latigo Canyon from the south will access the future

building site. Latigo Canyon Road in this vicinity includes a large 'switchback' turn. Staff recommends <u>approval</u> of the proposed project with a Special Condition addressing the disposal of excavated material. The project, as conditioned, will therefore be consistent with the Coastal Act.

**LOCAL APPROVALS RECEIVED:** Approval in Concept: City of Malibu Planning Department, dated July 25, 2000; In Concept Approval, City of Malibu Environmental Health Department, dated April 26, 2000; Coastal Commission Approval Only, County of Los Angeles Fire Department, dated 3/21/01.

#### SUBSTANTIVE FILE DOCUMENTS:

Coastal Permit Application No. 4-01-045, Helper & Schoenberger; Limited Geologic. and Soils and Engineering Investigation by GeoConcepts, Inc. dated February 17, 2000; Geology Referral Sheet, dated 11/4/98, by the City of Malibu.

# STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

### <u>MOTION</u>: I move that the Commission approve Coastal Development Permit No. 4-00-179 pursuant to the staff recommendation.

#### STAFF RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL:

Staff recommends a **YES** vote. Passage of this motion will result in approval of the permit as conditioned and adoption of the following resolution and findings. The motion passes only by affirmative vote of a majority of the Commissioners present.

#### I. RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE PERMIT:

The Commission hereby approves a coastal development permit for the proposed development and adopts the findings set forth below on grounds that the development as conditioned will be in conformity with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act and will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction over the area to prepare a Local Coastal Program conforming to the provisions of Chapter 3. Approval of the permit complies with the California Environmental Quality Act because either; 1) feasible mitigation measures and/or alternatives have been incorporated to substantially lessen any significant adverse effects of the development on the environment, or 2) there are no further feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that would substantially lessen any significant adverse impacts of the development on the environment.



# II. Standard Conditions.

1. <u>Notice of Receipt and Acknowledgment</u>. The permit is not valid and development shall not commence until a copy of the permit, signed by the permittee or authorized agent, acknowledging receipt of the permit and acceptance of the terms and conditions, is returned to the Commission office.

2. <u>Expiration</u>. If development has not commenced, the permit will expire two years from the date on which the Commission voted on the application. Development shall be pursued in a diligent manner and completed in a reasonable period of time. Application for extension of the permit must be made prior to the expiration date.

3. <u>Interpretation</u>. Any questions of intent or interpretation of any term or condition will be resolved by the Executive Director or the Commission.

4. <u>Assignment</u>. The permit may be assigned to any qualified person, provided assignee files with the Commission an affidavit accepting all terms and conditions of the permit.

5. <u>Terms and Conditions Run with the Land</u>. These terms and conditions shall be perpetual, and it is the intention of the Commission and the permittee to bind all future owners and possessors of the subject property to the terms and conditions.

# III. Special Conditions

# 1. DISPOSAL OF EXCAVATED MATERIAL

The applicant shall dispose of all of the excavated or cut excess material consisting of about five cubic yards to an appropriate disposal site located either outside of the Coastal Zone or a site located within the Coastal Zone with a valid Coastal Development Permit for the disposal of fill material.

# IV. Findings and Declarations.

### A. Project Description and History

The project site is located along Latigo Canyon Road about three quarters of a mile inland within a portion of the Road that switchbacks as it climbs from the coastal terrace into the Santa Monica Mountains. The applicant is requesting approval to adjust the parcel line between two existing parcels now 3.007 and 3.669 acres in size to create two parcels to be 3.336 and 2.705 acres in size, cap an existing septic system now serving the existing residence, construct a new septic system to serve the existing residence with about five cubic yards of cut grading. The applicant proposes to dispose of all of the excavated or cut excess material at an appropriate disposal site located either outside of the Coastal Zone or a site located within the Coastal Zone with a valid Coastal Development Permit for the disposal of fill material. The

second parcel is vacant and includes an existing dirt driveway to an existing building site. The result of the parcel adjustment will move the existing residence from existing Parcel 2 to proposed Parcel 1 A. (Exhibits 3 - 5). The site is surrounded by residential development including numerous vacant parcels.

The subject site is not located within any designated environmentally sensitive habitat areas, although on adjoining property to the east, significant oak woodlands are designated along Latigo Canyon Creek on the Sensitive Resources Map certified by the Commission in the Los Angeles County Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains Land Use Plan.

The project site has been the subject of previous permit and amendment actions by the Commission. In 1979, the Commission approved Coastal Permit No. P-79-6210 (Catalino) to construct three residences on three separate parcels, two of these residences were approved for the two subject parcels. Only one residence was constructed as a result of Coastal Permit Amendment No. 5-81-599-A-5 and Coastal Permit Time Extension No. 5-81-599-E-6 (Sachs) approved in 1987. These two parcels were created as a result of the recording of two separate Grant Deeds on March 2, 1972 (Instrument No. 561 created the two subject parcels) dividing one parcel into four parcels; two adjoining parcels were also created in a similar manner that are not the subject of this application. Two Certificates of Compliances for each of the subject parcels were recorded on November 17, 1981 (Instrument Nos. 81-1136884 and 81-1136885) and both determined to be in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Subdivision Map Act and of the County Subdivision Ordinance by the County of Los Angeles. No Coastal Development Permit was required for this land division because it occurred prior to the effective date of the California Coastal Act of 1976 for this location along the coast.

#### B. <u>Accommodating New Development Near Sensitive Resource Areas</u>

Section 30250 (a) of the Coastal Act provides that new development be located within or near existing developed areas able to accommodate it, with adequate public services, where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources:

New residential, commercial, or industrial development, except as otherwise provided in this division, shall be located within, contiguous with, or in close proximity to, existing developed areas able to accommodate it or, where such areas are not able to accommodate it, in other areas with adequate public services and where it will not have significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on coastal resources. In addition, land divisions, other than leases for agricultural uses, outside existing developed areas shall be permitted only where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the created parcels would be no smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels.

Section 30105.5 of the Coastal Act defines the term "cumulatively", as it is applied in Section 30250(a) to mean that:

...the incremental effects of an individual project shall be reviewed in conjunction with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Section 30231 of the Coastal Act is designed to protect and enhance, or restore where feasible, marine resources and the biologic productivity and quality of coastal waters, including streams. Section 30231 of the Coastal Act states as follows:

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff, preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, and minimizing alteration of natural streams.

In addition, Section 30240 of the Coastal Act states that environmentally sensitive habitat areas must be protected against disruption of habitat values:

(a) Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas.

(b) Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas.

The Coastal Act requires that new development, including lot line adjustments, be permitted within contiguous, or in close proximity to existing developed areas, or if outside such areas, only where public services are adequate and only where public access and coastal resources will not be individually or cumulatively affected by such development. Section 30250 requires three tests to be met by the proposed development.

The new development proposed in this project consists of adjusting a parcel line between two parcels by moving about one half acre of land to reduce the size of one parcel to 2.705 acres, expand the size of the second parcel to 3.669 acres, cap an existing septic system, construct a new septic system to serve the existing residence on one parcel, while the second parcel is vacant. The project site is located at 5078 Latigo Canyon Road in the City of Malibu (Exhibits 1 - 5). The two subject parcels were created in 1972 by Grant Deeds recorded prior to the effective date of the Coastal Act. Many of the surrounding parcels are developed with residences including proposed Parcel 1 A, although vacant parcels are located in the area including Proposed Parcel 2 A, one of the subject parcels.

The Commission has reviewed lot line adjustment applications to ensure that newly created parcels are of sufficient size, have access to roads and other utilities, are

geologically stable and include appropriate building pad areas where future structures can be developed consistent with the resource protection policies of the Coastal Act. In particular, the Commission has ensured that future development on new parcels minimize landform alteration and impacts on visual and environmentally sensitive habitat area resources. These issues are discussed below.

The land use designations for the subject parcels will be addressed first. A review of the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains designated Land Use Plan, as certified by the Commission, indicates that there are two County land use designations on the property; Rural Land II and Rural Land III, providing one residential unit each for five and two acres, respectively. Most of the proposed Parcel 1 A with the existing residence is designated as Rural Land II, one residential unit for five acres while most of the proposed Parcel 2 A which is vacant is designated Rural Land III, one residential unit for two acres. The LUP density standard or guideline for these proposed parcels does not allow for any further subdivision of these parcels. Given that the proposed acreage size of these two parcels are slightly greater than that allowed under the LUP density guideline, the Commission finds that the proposed two parcel adjustment is in substantial conformance with the LUP density guideline for these proposed parcels.

Although the subject parcel is in substantial conformance with the density guideline in the Los Angeles County LUP, the proposed land division must meet the standards of the Coastal Act. Section 30250 provides the standard of review for the Commission to consider when reviewing this application for a parcel line adjustment. The proposed land division is not located within a developed area, as the Commission has found development located within the Malibu terrace as the 'developed area' of the Santa Monica Mountains area. The subject site is located as close as about threeguarter miles inland of the coast within an area the Commission has found to be the 'undeveloped area' in past Commission action. Coastal Act Section 30250 requires that new development, located outside existing developed areas, including this proposed project, must meet three tests. These tests include: 1) the site must have adequate public services, 2) be located in an area where the development will not have significant adverse effects on coastal resources, and 3) land divisions outside existing developed areas shall be permitted only where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the created parcels would be no smaller than the average size of surrounding parcels. These requirements are to ensure that development is located in close proximity to existing development and in areas with adequate public services. In other words, this policy is to prevent the "leap frogging" of new development into undeveloped areas, thereby preventing the potential significant adverse impacts of such development on coastal resources.

Regarding the first test, adequate public services, one of the subject parcels include an existing single family residence and garage now served by the following public services: water is provided by the Los Angeles County Water Works District; fire suppression is provided by the Los Angeles County Fire Department; a paved public road (Latigo Canyon Road) exists along the northern, southern, and eastern property boundaries of both parcels which is maintained by the City of Malibu Public Works Department; electric power is provided by Southern California Edison. Sewage

disposal service is currently provided by an on-site private septic system, as is common in this area. These same services are also available for the adjoining subject parcel for future residential development. The applicant provided an "In Concept Approval" for the parcel line adjustment and proposed sewage disposal system from the City of Malibu Environmental Health Department. Therefore, the proposed project is located in an area where adequate public services are available, and therefore, the project meets the first test of Section 30250.

Regarding the second test, first the issue of impacts to coastal resources on an individual basis will be discussed; cumulative impacts will be discussed next below. The applicant proposes to adjust a parcel line between two parcels. One parcel after the parcel line adjustment will have a single family residence and garage while the second parcel will be vacant. Existing Parcel 1 is property located along the eastern portion of Latigo Canyon Road which slopes steeply from the Road into Latigo Future residential development of this existing parcel would require Canvon. substantial cut and fill grading to construct a driveway, residence and garage that has the potential to adversely affect the designated ESHA located at the base of the slope on the adjoining property to the east where Latigo Canyon Creek is located. The applicant proposes to merge this existing Parcel 1 with that portion of Parcel 2, about one half acre, which includes an existing residence and garage. This residence and garage is located on the more level portion of this sloping hillside along Latigo Canyon Therefore the existing Parcel 1 is poorly sited for future residential Road. development. On the lower portion of existing Parcel 2, an existing dirt driveway and an area for a building pad is located. This building site and driveway is better suited for the future residential development, as it currently exists. With limited grading, a total of about 892 cubic vards of material, may be required for its future development. as evidenced by the applicant's submitted conceptual grading plan (Exhibit 6). The grading proposed is the minimum necessary to meet the Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements for fire protection purposes. The limited grading at this site is determined to be less than that which may be needed to construct new residential development on the steeply sloping portion of existing Parcel 1.

The applicant submitted a City of Malibu Geology Referral Sheet for this subject parcel line adjustment, dated 11/4/98 concluding that the project was geologically feasible. In addition, the applicant submitted a Geologic and Soils Investigation Report for a future project to expand the existing residence and construct a new garage on existing Parcel 2. This report concludes that a unrelated project near the proposed building site on proposed Parcel 2 A is feasible from a geologic standpoint. The applicant is not proposing any additions to the existing residence at this time. Future residential development located on this revised building site location has the potential to reduce any potential significant impacts to the designated ESHA and the watercourse of Latigo Canyon Creek, located to the east of this site. This application also includes the capping of the existing septic system and the construction of a new septic system with grading consisting of about five cubic yards of excavation. Therefore, the Commission finds that in order to ensure that the applicant's proposal to export the proposed excavation of about five cubic yards of cut material from the proposed new septic system to an appropriate disposal site is carried out as specified in Special Condition Number One.

No grading is proposed for the widening of the driveway or building pad as part of this application. Although these parcels are visible from Latigo Canyon Road, a LUP designated scenic road, and from the Coastal Slope Trail located to the south, no adverse visual impacts are expected as a result of the parcel line adjustment or the construction of a new septic system. Therefore, the proposed project, as conditioned, will not create adverse impacts on coastal resources on an individual basis.

Regarding the issue of cumulative impacts to coastal resources, the Commission has repeatedly emphasized the need to address the cumulative impacts of new development in the Malibu and Santa Monica Mountains area in past permit actions. The cumulative impact issue is important because of the existence of thousands of undeveloped and poorly sited parcels and multi-unit projects. The Commission has reviewed lot line and parcel line adjustment applications to ensure that newly created or reconfigured parcels are of sufficient size, have access to roads and other utilities, are geologically stable and contain an appropriate potential building pad area where future structures can be developed consistent with the resource protection policies of the Coastal Act. In particular, the Commission has ensured that future development on new or reconfigured parcels minimize landform alteration and other visual impacts, and impacts to environmentally sensitive habitat areas.

The Commission has found that minimizing the cumulative impacts of new development is especially critical in the Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains area because of the large number of lots which already exist, many in remote, rugged mountain and canyon areas. From a comprehensive planning perspective, the potential development of thousands of existing undeveloped and poorly sited parcels in these mountains would create cumulative impacts on coastal resources and public access over time. Because of the large number of existing undeveloped parcels and potential future development, the demands on road capacity, public services, recreational facilities, and beaches would be expected to grow tremendously.

Because the applicant proposes to adjust the existing parcel line between two existing parcels resulting in two parcels, mitigation for cumulative impacts is not necessary. Staff review indicates that no incremental contribution to cumulative impacts would occur, such as, traffic, sewage disposal, recreational uses, visual scenic quality and resource degradation impacts be associated with the proposed development. Further, since no net increase in residential units result from the approval of the proposed parcel line adjustment, the proposed project, therefore, meets the second test of Section 30250.

Regarding the third test of Section 30250, a review of the surrounding existing parcels was made. The area surrounding the subject two parcels within a one quarter mile radius was identified within portions of two watersheds; the Latigo Canyon Creek and Escondido Canyon Creek. Using aerial photographs and assessor records, the number, size, average parcel size and developed status were analyzed for these parcels. To determine the appropriate surrounding area in the Santa Monica Mountains, the Commission has, in past permit decisions, considered the average and mean lot size within one quarter of a mile, with consideration to major topographic

features. In a past court decision (Billings vs. California Coastal Commission) the court examined the use of an arithmetic mean to determine the size of lots that was typical for a geographic area. In Billings, the court rejected the arbitrary delineation of a one quarter mile radius as the sole criteria for determining the appropriate surrounding area, and instead found that it was appropriate to also take into consideration major topographic features such as ridgelines to determine the surrounding area. Also in Billings, the court rejected the Commission's use of the arithmetic mean to determine the "average" parcel size and rather found the use of a median or mode to be more appropriate. The Commission has found that the mode is a method of calculating the average that is of limited utility. Thus, the median is the best method of arriving at the average lot or parcel size.

The subject two parcels are located between two portions of Latigo Canyon Road within a 'switchback' area of this Road. This area is characterized by parcels ranging in size from less than a half acre to eleven acres in size. The surrounding area selected for this parcel is a one quarter mile radius surrounding the subject parcel, located within portions of two watersheds. The subject parcels are located along a descending ridge separating two watersheds. In lieu of identifying a surrounding area that includes all the lands within these two watersheds, the guarter mile radius surrounding these two parcels were chosen by staff as the appropriate geographic area. There are 40 parcels range in size from less than less than a half acre to eleven acres. The average parcel size using the median of parcel sizes is 1.48 acres which is less than the smaller of the two proposed parcels at 2.705 acres in size. Therefore, the proposed parcel sizes are larger than the median parcel size of surrounding lots. A visual review of aerial photographs indicates that over 50 % of these surrounding parcels are developed with residential development. Therefore, the applicants propose a parcel line adjustment where 50 percent of the usable parcels in the area have been developed and the adjusted parcels would be no smaller than the median size of surrounding parcels, and meets the third test of Section 30250.

As discussed above, this application, as conditioned, meets all of the applicable tests of Section 30250. Therefore, the Commission finds that, as conditioned, the proposed project is consistent with Sections 30231, 30240, and 30250 of the Coastal Act.

### C. <u>Septic System</u>

The Commission recognizes that the potential build-out of lots in the Santa Monica Mountains, and the resultant installation of septic systems, may contribute to adverse health effects and geologic hazards in the local area. Section 30231 of the Coastal Act states that:

The biological productivity and the quality of coastal waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries, and lakes appropriate to maintain optimum populations of marine organisms and for the protection of human health shall be maintained and, where feasible, restored through, among other means, minimizing adverse effects of waste water discharges and entrainment, controlling runoff,

preventing depletion of ground water supplies and substantial interference with surface water flow, encouraging waste water reclamation, maintaining natural vegetation buffer areas that protect riparian habitats, minimizing alteration of natural streams.

The applicant is proposing to construct a new septic system to accommodate the sewage of the existing residence in a location closer to the residence and to cap piping to the existing septic system so it will no longer be connected to the existing residence. A new septic system is needed as the existing septic system will be located on the vacant parcel as a result of the parcel line adjustment. The existing system may be used for future residential development on the vacant parcel. The applicant has submitted conceptual approval from the City of Malibu, Department of Environmental Health dated April 26, 2000 stating that the proposed parcel line adjustment and septic system is in conformance with the minimum requirements of the City of Malibu Uniform Plumbing Code. The City of Malibu's minimum health code standards for septic systems have been found protective of coastal resources and take into consideration the percolation capacity of soils along the coastline, among other criteria. Therefore, the Commission finds that the proposed project is consistent with Section 30231 of the Coastal Act.

#### D. Local Coastal Program

Section 30604 of the Coastal Act states that:

a) Prior to certification of the local coastal program, a coastal development permit shall be issued if the issuing agency, or the commission on appeal, finds that the proposed development is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200) of this division and that the permitted development will not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare a local program that is in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 (commencing with Section 30200).

Section 30604(a) of the Coastal Act provides that the Commission shall issue a coastal permit only if the project will not prejudice the ability of the local government having jurisdiction to prepare a Local Coastal Program which conforms with Chapter 3 policies of the Coastal Act. The preceding sections provide findings that the proposed project will be in conformity with the provisions of Chapter 3 if certain conditions are incorporated into the project and accepted by the applicant. As conditioned, the proposed development will not create adverse impacts and is found to be consistent with the applicable policies contained in Chapter 3. Therefore, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development, as conditioned, will not prejudice the City of Malibu's ability to prepare a Local Coastal Program for this area of Malibu that is also consistent with the policies of Chapter 3 of the Coastal Act as required by Section 30604(a).



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### California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Section 13096(a) of the Commission's administrative regulations requires Commission approval of Coastal Development Permit application to be supported by a finding showing the application, as conditioned by any conditions of approval, to be consistent with any applicable requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Section 21080.5(d)(2)(A) of CEQA prohibits a proposed development from being approved if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse effect which the activity may have on the environment.

The Commission finds that, the proposed project, as conditioned will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, within the meaning of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970. Therefore, the proposed project, as conditioned, has been adequately mitigated and is determined to be consistent with CEQA and the policies of the Coastal Act.

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